

For Camden TCA Mike O'Brien, Court Administration is a Way of Life

As an undergraduate in the 1970s, Mike O'Brien worked in New Jersey's courts to put himself through Rutgers.

Now, more than a quarter century later, he has been named the Camden Vicinage's trial court administrator (TCA).

"We in the Camden Vicinage are pleased to welcome Mike O'Brien as our TCA," said Camden Assignment Judge Francis J. Orlando Jr. "Mike brings a record of demonstrated leadership and accomplishments to Camden. With Mike as the TCA, Camden looks forward to even greater achievements."

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Judiciary Times

Winter 2002-2003

The newsletter of the New Jersey Judiciary

Judiciary and Labor Dept. Join to Help Probation Clients Get and Keep Jobs

"Get a Job!"

The Silhouettes' 1958 doo-wop classic hit the nail on the head. If you want to get your life together, employment may be just the ticket.

But sometimes finding the right job is no easy matter.

"Research supports it," said Edward Miklosey, a probation specialist with the Administrative Office of the Courts. "Probationers with jobs are more likely to succeed. Now, thanks to a new partnership with the state Department of Labor, the Judiciary is able to offer a statewide network of

resources to help clients get and keep jobs."

Mary DeLeo, assistant director for Probation Services, has spoken highly of the program. "This opportunity is a key in meeting

outcome-based standards goals for probation," she said.

A kick-off event Sept. 12 launched the partnership which opens up a world of opportunity to job-hunting probationers and gives

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Inside...

Volunteers are making a difference in the courts' mediation program. See article on page 6 and a sidebar, "Your Dog Bit My Dog," about one volunteer's experience, on page 7.



Hands joined in partnership are (left to right): Ralph DiLemme, Newark One-Stop manager; Weldon Montague, Newark One-Stop probation liaison; Thomas Caldwell, assistant director of the Department of Labor Division of Employment and Training; Mary DeLeo, assistant director of Probation Services; Edward Miklosey, probation specialist in Probation Services, and James Rosol, master probation officer in Union County Probation Division.

Judge Helen E. Hoens Elevated to Appellate



Judge Hoens

Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz has announced the appointment of Superior Court Judge Helen E. Hoens, presiding judge of the Civil Division in the Somerset/ Hunterdon/Warren Vicinage, to the Appellate Division effective Nov. 1, 2002.

"The Judiciary and the citizens of the Somerset/ Hunterdon/Warren Vicinage have

been well served by Judge Hoens' wisdom, fairness and commitment to service," said Chief Justice Poritz. "Now the Appellate Division also will benefit from her talent and dedication."

Judge Hoens has served in Somerset Superior Court since March 31, 1994. Formerly an active member of the American Bar Association, she is a member of the New Jersey Bar Association, the Essex County Bar Association and the Somerset County Bar Association.

Judge Hoens was a partner at Lum, Hoens, Conant, Danzis and Kleinberg before her appointment to the bench. She specialized in civil litigation, including financial, construction and product liability cases.

After graduation with high honors from the College of

William and Mary, Judge Hoens received her juris doctorate, with honors, from Georgetown University Law Center.

She served as a law clerk to Judge John J. Gibbons during his service on the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit before embarking on a career in private practice.

Prior to her initial appointment to the bench, Judge Hoens worked for years on behalf of persons with disabilities, particularly those with autism.

In addition to her contributions for the Disability Law Primer, published by the Essex County Bar Association, her pro bono work included working on behalf of charitable groups that support autism research and advocacy.

A Somerset County resident, Judge Hoens lives with her husband, Robert W. Schwaneberg, and their son, Charles.

Judiciary Times is prepared by Communication Services, Office of Public Affairs, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) for employees of the Judiciary and volunteers who work with the court system.

The Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court is Deborah T. Poritz. The Administrative Director of the Courts is Richard J. Williams.

Please e-mail short news articles saved as Word documents, photos and/or suggestions to:

Linda.Holt@judiciary.state.nj.us or send disk, photos and paper copy to: Editor, *Judiciary Times*, Office of Public Affairs, PO Box 037, Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, Trenton NJ 08625-0037. Submissions are subject to editing, and not all can be published.

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Ed Baldinger, Janet Bastien, Thomas Dibble, Frank Hoeber, Judith Irizarry, Grace Kimbrough

Thanks to the other Judiciary staff who contributed articles and photographs.

Judiciary and Labor Dept. Join Forces

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dated June 12, 2002, probation officers can assign clients to visit Labor's One-Stop Career Centers located throughout the state.

At the center, a client can explore careers, meet with counselors, take classes, learn computer skills, search or post resumes, visit job fairs, and get information about housing, day care, transportation and veterans' programs. More important, clients learn to view employment as a career path, not simply a series of short-term solutions for making money.

"An added plus for probation officers is that we have access to Labor's database and

can track a client's progress at the center, from the time he or she enters the door until they have found employment," said Miklosey.

The partnership is an outgrowth of "best practices" that developed in response to the Judiciary's 1998 strategic plan. One such best practice was a job preparedness program funded by a state grant in the Passaic Vicinage. Chaired by Joan Bozza, Monmouth Vicinage probation officer, the Judiciary's Employment-Best Practices Group studied this program and is issuing a report to the Conference of Chief Probation Officers. One of the major recommendations in the report is the Judiciary-Labor partnership.

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For Camden TCA Mike O'Brien, Court Administration is a Way of Life

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O'Brien is similarly taken by New Jersey's second-largest vicinage.

"It was quite an honor to be selected," O'Brien reflected recently. "The elements are in place for some good things to happen in Camden."

Moving from Essex, where he worked since 1990 and served as assistant trial court administrator, O'Brien already is thoroughly versed in the world of urban courts.

"I enjoy the urban environment, because you know you are serving a population that really relies on court services," O'Brien said. "You get a unique sense of the impact of the court on a wide range of issues."

While Essex is mostly urban and suburban, Camden County has a rural component as well. "Some of the best farmland in the world is in Camden County," observed O'Brien, noting the county's long link with Campbell's and other food industries.

O'Brien's background in city courts was one of the reasons he was selected for the TCA position.

He received a B.A. in Urban Studies from Rutgers and became a deputy court clerk in 1975 in Teaneck. He served as court clerk-violations clerk in Teaneck



Mike O'Brien

before becoming special criminal assignment clerk in Bergen Superior Court in the early '80s.

O'Brien went on to become statewide speedy trial coordinator in the Administrative Office of the Courts and in 1990 became criminal division manager in Essex. He was promoted to assistant TCA in 1995.

At Essex, O'Brien is remembered for his role in dramatically reducing backlog.

"Over the years we've had success in a number of areas," reflected Essex Assignment Judge Joseph A. Falcone. "It would not be a stretch to say that a common denominator in every one of our successes in the Essex Vicinage was Mike O'Brien."

O'Brien resides in Milltown with his wife Esther and children Elizabeth, 12, and Joseph, 8. O'Brien makes time in his busy schedule to serve as an enthusiastic Little League coach.

While O'Brien remains employed in the Judiciary and looks forward to the challenges ahead in Camden, his former colleagues in Essex are sad to see him leave the northeastern part of the state.

"On both a professional and personal level I will miss him," said Judge Falcone. "Truly, our loss is Camden's gain!"

TCA Ijoma to Lead National Court Management Group in '04-'05

Collins Ijoma, trial court administrator for the Essex Vicinage, is in line to become president-elect of the National Association for Court Management (NACM) when the group meets this summer.

According to NACM's leadership model, Collins is in line to become association president in the 2004-2005 court year.

Ijoma was elected vice president last July at NACM's annual conference. NACM is the premier association for court management and administration in the United States and internationally.



Collins Ijoma

Community Service Learning Makes a Difference in Burlington County

by Grace Kimbrough, Probation Officer and CSL Facilitator, and Ed Baldinger, Senior Probation Officer

Imagine being stranded on a deserted island where you can have only one item and one person to help you survive. What would you do?

Fortunately, not all the decisions we have to make in life are so dramatic. But no matter what they are, decisions should be based on knowledge, clear thinking and sound judgment. These skills are especially important for young people who have been through the court system and are in need of tools to help them avoid future problems.

To help foster these skills, the Community Service Learning (CSL) program uses cognitive skills training to help teach participants how to become responsible members of the community.

The cognitive skills program includes administering personality tests, teaching young people to think before they act, and helping them deal constructively with anger.

The CSL program is a collaborative effort of the Administrative

Office of the Courts and the New Jersey Department of Education.

In Burlington County, the CSL program was adopted by the Juvenile Probation Unit to teach young people how to develop and use these behavior-management strategies to resolve conflicts, solve problems and prevent future involvement in the juvenile justice system.

The program requires that the juveniles complete 34 hours of training and 50 hours of community service over 17 weeks. All participants must be between 13 and 18 years old and have a history of substance abuse or violence. They must be serving a one-year probation term and enrolled full-time in a traditional or alternative school program.

Since its inception on March 21, 2001, the CSL program in Burlington County has had a total of 53 participants and has successfully graduated three classes (the current class will graduate in February 2003). In Burlington County, the 18-week program includes two hours of cognitive skills training each week and participation in various community service projects. Upon successful completion of the program, partici-

pants attend a graduation ceremony and receive certificates of completion from Superior Court Judge Cornelius P. Sullivan of the Family Division.

As is typical with this age group, participants tend to enter the program resistant and skeptical. But the youths' attitudes quickly change when they learn that they have total control and ownership of what they achieve in the program. In fact, they set their own rules because the CSL program requires participants to set up one goal for themselves each day. Even after the class graduates, many of the participants feel comfortable coming back and visiting for advice or support.

While it is still premature to determine the overall success of the program, the impact CSL has had on the youth who participate in the program cannot be overestimated. The transformation of the youth from the beginning to the end of the program has been nothing short of remarkable.

Both the Family Court and the Juvenile Probation Unit support the CSL program in Burlington County. The program has become a useful sentencing option for the Family Court. Likewise, the Juvenile Probation Unit has recognized and supported the program as a valuable resource for youth at risk of further involvement in the juvenile system. Juvenile probation officers Eileen Liebold (who bakes treats for the kids), Ellen Riley and Josh Ginter have each assisted in running the weekly classes when needed. Their time, energy and help have been greatly appreciated.

We are looking forward to continuing to offer this program in Burlington County in the years ahead.

Program Attracts Statewide Participation

Guest Speaker—William Freeman, director of the Community Labor Assistance Program, Department of Corrections, speaks at the CEP/SLAP/ECS meeting at the Hughes Justice Complex on Oct. 25. The program was coordinated by the Comprehensive Enforcement Program (CEP) in the Judiciary's Probation Division. SLAP is the Sheriffs Labor Assistance Program, while ECS is Enforced Community Service.



Tech-KNOWLEDGE-y



That's Why They Call It the World Wide Web

The Internet: It started out as a plan for a military research network that could survive a nuclear strike, and as of last year was in the homes of over 60 million Americans. It presents us with an opportunity to research, shop and communicate, while adding convenience as well as entertainment to our lives.

But, if you're going to surf safely, some protection is in order. You also need to know that your enhanced ability to gather information extends to those that are interested in gathering, storing and disbursing information about you.

There is no such thing as "absolute privacy" on the Internet. You should be wary of sites without clear, concise privacy policies and not disclose personal information unless you know who's collecting it and why.

Internet sites providing the highest level of personal privacy will disclose the purpose and intended use of information they gather. Tips on protecting your online privacy have been published by the Health Resource Partners of Kansas City on their Web site at <http://www.healthresource.org/services/fivethings.html>.

Does your family share holiday pictures via a family Web page?

A recent article in *The New York Times* on limiting your personal search exposure advises that you take steps to prevent a personal Web site from being noted by the robotic programs which "crawl" and index the Web. To learn how to do this, go to www.robotstxt.org.

And if you are tracing your family tree and posting genealogy finds online, consider whether or not you have permission to publish information about living people, such as their mother's maiden name, which can be useful to identity thieves.

Online shopping adds new meaning to the old phrase "let your fingers do the walking." But when you let your mouse run your errands for you, be careful to make sure your transactions

are safe and your credit card information is going only to those intended.

Some online payment services claim to ensure safe transactions. Check out other ways to protect yourself while shopping at www.howstuffworks.com/identity-theft5.htm.

Have you ever heard of an "Ego Search?" It means you put your own name in the search engine and see what comes up. It's fun, but it's also a good way to see if information is being published that is false or just shouldn't be there for privacy reasons.

If you find such information, contact the site's owner and take steps to have the information removed or corrected.



To find out more information on using the Internet safely, visit www.internet-safety.org. They have a wealth of information on safe surfing, e-mail tips and "netiquette" (online customs and etiquette).

You'll find additional links and information on legal issues and awareness for children on the "Net."

Yes, it's a wild, wild Web, full of information, but full of potential for over-exposure. A high SPF (Surf Protection Factor) is highly recommended.

Volunteers Offer Professional-Quality Mediation Services in New Jersey Courts

For many people, the word "volunteers" evokes images of bake sales, car washes and other valuable but not exactly core functions in an organization.

That certainly is not the case with those who volunteer with the New Jersey Judiciary. New Jersey's courts assign key roles to highly trained volunteers in major court initiatives. In fact, one of these programs has emerged as a leading venue to resolve conflicts.

"More than 1,100 of the Judiciary's more than 5,000 volunteers participate in the mediation program, primarily in our municipal courts," said Emille Cox, manager of volunteer services in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

"While many are individuals who are retired from various walks of life, volunteer mediators also include people in the work force who want to give something back to the community," he said.

...they worked out a mutually acceptable agreement without having to go to court.

Mediation offers litigants an alternative to a hearing before a judge. The mediator helps parties in a dispute communicate clearly and develop realistic solutions.

Volunteer mediators serve in municipal court programs in each county except Hudson which follows the professional mediator model that existed in the 1970s. At that time, professional mediation programs were operating in Newark, Jersey City, Trenton, New Brunswick, Camden and East Orange.

In addition to their involvement with municipal court programs, today's volunteer mediators assist with custody and parenting time plans in the Family Division in Atlantic, Burlington and Ocean. Volunteers also assist the Special Civil Part (small claims) in Burlington and Essex.

Thomas Farrell, manager of Complementary Dispute Resolution Programs in the AOC, recalls one such case involving a dispute between an aging grocer who wanted to keep working and his sons, who wanted him to retire and leave the business to them.

"The grocer had never really communicated to his sons how much he enjoyed his work," reflected Farrell, who has been involved with court-connected

mediation programs since 1976. "The sons on the other hand just wanted Dad to retire in Florida and get some well deserved rest. The problem was, neither side had communicated this to the other!"

Once the mediator heard each side of the story, he was able to get the father and sons talking candidly to each other. They worked out a mutually acceptable agreement without having to go to court.

Although the program's goals of better customer service, efficiency and cost-effectiveness sound as though they just leapt off the Judiciary's strategic plan, mediation has been helping citizens resolve conflicts in our municipal courts since 1974. The first New Jersey court to run a volunteer mediation program was in 1979 in the Willingboro Municipal Court in Burlington County.

In starting the program nearly 25 years ago, Willingboro Judge Uri Taenzer reached out to religious and civic leaders in the community, seeking volunteers with the talent and commitment to make the mediation program a success. The late Judge David Keyko of Camden and Gloucester Counties also played an important role in developing the volunteer mediation program.

As the program evolved, the Judiciary required completion of an 18-hour, intensive mediation training program for volunteers interested in mediation. The training provides volunteers with the tools they need to be effective mediators and clarifies the unique role of mediation in conflict resolution.

Mediators...act as neutral facilitators to help the parties communicate directly...

"There is a big difference between mediation and adjudication," said Farrell. "Only judges can make legal decisions in a case. Similarly, mediators are not arbitrators. Arbitrators hear both sides of a story and then render a decision. Mediators, on the other hand, act as neutral facilitators to help the parties communicate directly with each other and resolve their own conflicts."

Volunteers' interest in mediation continues to grow.

"Our volunteer mediators are excited about this important work," said Emille Cox. "A key ingredient is enthusiasm," said Cox. "Having had an opportunity to meet many of these volunteers, I understand their enthusiasm and share their sense of satisfaction."

"Your Dog Bit My Dog" and Other Tales from a Volunteer Mediator

Madeline Hersh, a volunteer mediator in Monmouth, remembers it well.

The woman with the little dog sat across from her to the right.

The man with the big dog sat across from her to the left.

The woman had been taking her daily walk, she said, when the man's vicious dog ran out from his unfenced yard and bit her gentle little dog so badly he had to be rushed to the vet. "I want him stopped!" she seethed. "He has to keep that dog locked up!"

Hersh listened respectfully. Then it was the man's turn.

Vicious dog? What vicious dog? His dog was as mild as a lamb. This woman was taunting his innocent dog with that little yippy thing. Why did she insist on marching by his property every day upsetting his pet? *She* was the one who should be stopped!

"In a situation like this, you won't have one person who wins and one who loses," said Hersh, who has been a volunteer mediator for more than 2-1/2 years.

"Each person needs to come away with something. The mediator asks each party what they need to make them whole."

In the case of the two dogs, Hersh asked the woman if there were any costs involved. The woman said yes, there were veterinary fees. Would you be able to pay these fees, since your dog actually did the damage, Hersh asked the man. He said he would.

Then Hersh turned her attention to the woman. You have to live near this man, he's your neighbor, she said. Is it possible you can change your walking route a little to avoid his property? I guess I could, the woman conceded.

Turning to the man, Hersh asked if he would be willing to put a long leash on his dog when he was

outside. Turning to the woman, Hersh asked if she could walk her dog at another time of day. Both agreed.

In less than an hour, a dispute that could have gone to court and perhaps driven a wedge between two neighbors forever was resolved amiably thanks to volunteer mediation.

"People ask me why I do this when I already have a job, family and other interests," said Hersh, who works as public information officer for Monmouth County. "But there is nothing like the satisfaction of helping people communicate and resolve their differences. I feel as though I'm

giving something back to the community, and that feels good."

A veteran of some 25 mediation cases, Hersh said that volunteer mediation leads participants to a conversation about the true nature of their differences. "Once they understand the options, they are ready to work out their differences. Without this communication, there is



Both parties in a dispute present their perspectives to Madeline Hersh, a volunteer mediator in the Monmouth Vicinage.

always the danger of the problem escalating and veering out of control, perhaps permanently," she said.

To become successful mediators, volunteers need to know a little about statutes and local ordinances, but mostly they need to have a neutral attitude and common sense, Hersh said.

"So many cases aren't major disputes or felonies, they are just people disagreeing or not getting along," she said. "One of the benefits of mediation is that it helps people to see what the problem really is, take responsibility for their actions and work out an agreement so the difficulty doesn't happen again."

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Kenichi Kiyofuji Named Japanese Visiting Judge

Judge Kenichi Kiyofuji is the visiting Japanese judge for the current court year.

Judge of the Sapporo District Court, Judge Kiyofuji came to the United States in June 2002.

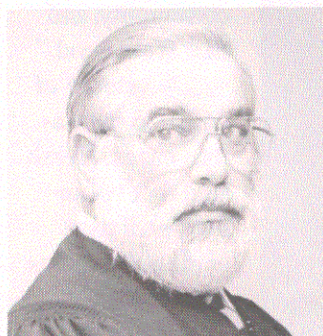
During a visit to the Administrative Office of the Courts in September, the judge discussed media relations with Winnie Comfort, director of Public Affairs. He said he was impressed by the Judiciary's prize-winning Web site and noted that courts in Japan recently have started posting important opinions online.

The new visiting judge lives in Edison with his wife and two-year-old son. The family expects to stay in New Jersey until June 2003.



Judge Kiyofuji discusses media relations with Winnie Comfort, director of Public Affairs with the Administrative Office of the Courts, during a recent visit to the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton.

Judge Nardi Receives Shield of Loyola Award



Judge Joseph M. Nardi

Judge Joseph M. Nardi, currently on recall with Burlington County Superior Court, received the Shield of Loyola Award in October from the Alumni Association of Saint Joseph's University.

The Shield is the association's most prestigious award given to an exemplary graduate of the university.

Judge Nardi served the Family Division of Superior Court in the Burlington Vicinage for 13 years and previously was the presiding judge of the Family Division in the Camden Vicinage.

A native of Camden, Judge Nardi was the city's mayor from 1969 to 1973. He also served as a municipal court judge in Camden and Voorhees Township.

Honors are nothing new to Judge Nardi. He has received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from both Rutgers University and the Rutgers University School of Law, and has been the recipient of other honors, including awards from the Bishop of the Diocese of Camden and the Camden Board of Education.

A resident of Audubon, he is married to the former Rita Geoghegan. The couple has seven children and nine grandchildren.

Judiciary Web Site Earns an "A"

The New Jersey Judiciary received the only "A" in the Eagleton Institute of Politics' "Web Report Cards" for state government this fall. The Judiciary was cited for having one of state government's "Best Overall Webs."

"The Judiciary site features extensive content for both legal professionals and general public, including resources for those wishing to represent themselves," the text of the award declares.

"N.J. Municipal Courts Direct online traffic and parking ticket payment service is a model of how electronic technology may facilitate transactional services for average citizens."

Responsible for the prize-winning Web site are: Toni McLaughlin, assistant director of Internet Services in the Office of Public Affairs, Administrative Office of the Courts; Thomas Arey, Jeanne Hart-Convery, Nicole Southard and Doris McCormick, Web developers; and Keva Fulmore, secretary. Winnie Comfort, director of Public Affairs, has oversight of this unit.

"The Web site is a collaborative effort," McLaughlin said. "Its success reflects the contribution of staff throughout the Judiciary who provide content and technical support, as well as the hard work and dedication of the Web team."

Bangladesh Chief Justice Visits New Jersey Judiciary

ShAgatom!

That's Bangla for "Welcome!" and a warm welcome it was as Mainur Chowdhury, the chief justice of Bangladesh, visited with Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz and Richard J. Williams, administrative director of the courts, in Trenton on Sept. 30.



Bangladesh CJ Chowdhury discusses judicial principles with New Jersey Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz. Looking on are Judge Richard J. Williams (right), Judge Ali and Court Register Siddiqui.

Accompanying Chief Justice Chowdhury were Judge Mohammed Rustam Ali, Supreme Court Register Quamraul Siddiqui, and Maurice Geiger, representing the World Bank.

Theodore J. Fetter, deputy director, and Samuel D. Conti, manager/professional services, arranged the details of the two-day visit to New Jersey.

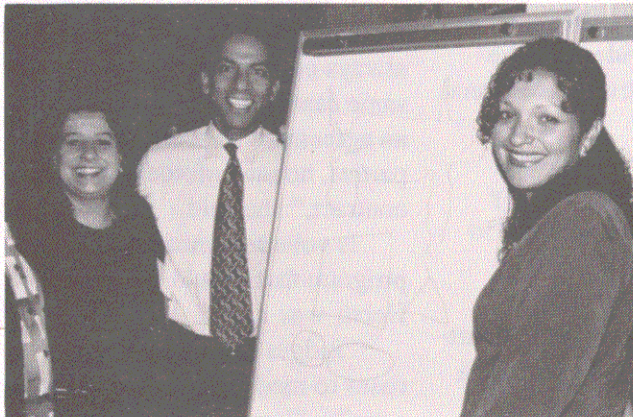
Staff in the Administrative Office of the Courts who met with the group in Trenton included: Stephen W. Townsend, Supreme Court clerk; Jane F. Castner, assistant director, and Michelle V. Perone, chief of civil court programs, both in the Civil Division; Patrick J. Monahan, chief/professional services; Marilyn Slivka, manager of special programs, and Thomas Farrell, manager of Complementary Dispute Resolution programs, both in the Programs and Procedures Division.

The second day of the visit included a visit in Newark with Essex Assignment Judge Joseph A. Falcone and Presiding Civil Division Judge Eugene J. Codey Jr.

Others in Essex who met with the delegation included: Collins Ijoma, trial court administrator (TCA); Michael Cammarota, Civil Division manager; Vanessa Hendrickson, assistant Civil Division manager; Thomas Dibble, special assistant to the TCA; and Ombudsman Michele Bertran.

The People's Republic of Bangladesh is a democracy with an appointed Supreme Court that has two divisions, Appellate and High Court. The nation is bordered by India from the north, east and west and by the Bay of Bengal and Myanmar (formerly Burma) from the south. The country has 130 million people in an area a little larger than Utah (by contrast, the population of Utah is about 2-1/4 million).

Staff Commute to Two-Day College



More Judiciary staff attended this year's Staff College than in previous years, commuting for two days to two sites. Supervisors and team leaders joined senior management in a variety of learning activities. Shown left to right during a break between seminars are: Monika Loeffler and Eduardo Ruiz from Organizational Development and Training, and Adriana Lockman from the Camden Vicinage.



Family Division and Public Affairs Team Up On Grant-Funded Video Series on Domestic Violence

Editor's note: Domestic violence is one of the most serious issues facing the justice system today. More than 75,000 domestic violence cases are filed in New Jersey every year. These sensitive cases require especially prompt and thoughtful attention by the courts. To help judges and court personnel obtain the best possible training, the Judiciary is developing a video education program on the most effective management and resolution of domestic violence cases. The following article describes the making of the video series, which will be available to court personnel in 2003.

by Harry T. Cassidy
Assistant Director
Family Practice Division

Thanks to funding from the STOP Violence Against Women Act, the Family Practice Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), with creative assistance from the Office of Public Affairs, has been hard at work during the fall and winter producing a series of domestic violence training tapes.

These tapes will be used to assist in providing mandatory domestic violence training to all newly hired or appointed judges and court personnel who deal with victims of domestic violence, either directly or indirectly, to ensure that they understand the dynamics of domestic violence and the provisions of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act.

The tapes include a dramatic enactment of an act of domestic violence portrayed by professional actors as well as improvised courtroom scenes and footage taped at a nearby police station. When the project is completed, a set of five or more tapes will provide comprehensive training to Judiciary personnel who need to deal with this important topic. The second phase of the project will provide advanced training in seven areas in the form of an interactive CD.

I assigned the project to Chris Hepner, an administrative specialist in the Family Division, who both wrote and administered the grant. To say that she was excited about the project, is putting it mildly.

Soon she began making plans to begin the project. She spoke with the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women and enlisted the

*"...a lot of hard work,
but our initial results showed
it was well worth it."*

consultant services of their legal counsel, Gina Bellucci.

Next on board was Bill Mecca, video production coordinator, from the AOC's Office of Public Affairs. Bill drew on his extensive experience as a producer, videographer and writer to script, direct and videotape the production with a true professional touch.

The Division of Criminal Justice made available Deputy Attorney General Bill Zaorski to serve as a consultant. A script editorial consultant and the Hamilton Township Police Department (Mercer County) became a part of this project as well.

Chris and Gina started writing the scripts last year. Their first script depicted the actual domestic violence incident. The second script followed the victim of domestic violence in obtaining a

Temporary Restraining Order. Other scripts included the Final Restraining Order hearing and a contempt hearing.

After writing for many months, the first script was ready to be filmed. Actors were auditioned and hired, and filming days were selected. One last detail remained: where to film? Chris made one unfortunate "mistake;" she offered the use of her home for the filming. We obtained special permission to use Chris' house so we wouldn't have to rent a location. However, I don't think that Chris will ever repeat this

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Tales from a Volunteer

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If there *should* be a relapse, though, disputing parties may always come back to court on the same case. "Mediation results in an agreement between civilized parties, not an enforceable legal contract," she said.

Is volunteer mediation a program that should stay as it is, Hersh was asked.

"Judges should send *more* cases to mediation," she said with a smile. "It really has a place in reducing court calendars, and I know for a fact that it helps people understand the nature of conflicts and resolve their differences."

—Linda Brown Holt

Family Division and Public Affairs Team Up On Grant-Funded Video Series on Domestic Violence

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offer. She will tell you the rest:

"I own a small townhouse.

Was I prepared for a little army to come in and take over my home? No! I forewarned my neighbors that there would be some unusual activity at my house that week. Am I glad I did. We had scheduled to film the domestic violence incident in my home on Sept. 25 and 26. We scheduled to film at Hamilton Township Police Headquarters on Sept. 27.

"On the 25th, everyone showed up. Bill Mecca brought Ralph, the sound engineer, and



Drama in the making--Actor Torrance Downes portrays a man accused of domestic violence in the Judiciary's new personnel training video. Bill Mecca, video coordinator, captures the scene on tape.

started setting-up lights, camera and sound equipment all over the living room and dining room. The actors showed up (Torrance Downes, Rima DiBien, Sally Rubin and Don Meehan). Next to arrive were Sgt. John Walczak and Officers Babecki and Butera.

"So it began: actors, producer, sound engineer, law enforcement, plus others. We started filming, with plenty of notice to my neighbors so they would not be alarmed.

"Playing the part of the abusive spouse, Torrance was 'arrested' by Hamilton Township Police and was

placed in the squad car repeatedly until Bill got the shots that he was after. We then packed up and headed over to Hamilton Township Police Headquarters to film Torrance getting 'booked.'

"What an experience! It was a wonderful group of people to work with - they teased each other, they supported each other, they were consummate professionals. It was a lot of hard work, but our initial results showed it was well worth it."

Chris will provide an update to this project in a future issue of *Judiciary Times*. The video series gives the Judiciary an important tool in its efforts to manage domestic violence cases quickly, effectively and sensitively.

Judiciary and Labor Dept. Join Forces

Continued from page 1

"Our partnership ensures maximum access by probation clients to state employment resources, including assessment, training and jobs," Bozza said.

The AOC's Bill Burrell agrees.

"Employment is important for people on probation," said Burrell, chief of supervision services.

"Clients with jobs are better at paying fines and, where necessary, child support. They also have a better social connection to the community."

To meet another recommendation of the best practices group, the National Institute of Corrections provided probation officers with training last winter to help them learn specific employment strategies for use in their vicinages. Among the techniques taught were assessing needs, role-playing and coaching probationers through the job search process.

But employing probationers is not a one-way street, Burrell observed. "With probationers, the employer knows the background of the person he or she is hiring," he said. "Employers can also get federal tax credits and bonding insurance for these employees."

There are pluses for probation officers as well.

"With the renewed emphasis on outcomes, probation officers know that we are being held accountable for results," said Burrell. "This is a lot easier to do when probationers are working."

Referral of clients to the One Stop Centers is scheduled to begin in January 2003. In the meantime, probationers may take advantage of many other resources available through the Department of Labor.

For further information about the program, contact Edward Miklosey by e-mail or call (609) 633-9749.

Mercer Vicinage Celebrates Customer Service Week 2002

by Judith Irizarry

The Mercer Vicinage Service Quality Team sponsored a week dedicated to Customer Service from October 7 through October 11, 2002. It was a week of activities that created opportunities for sharing, discussing, evaluating and celebrating customer service efforts in the vicinage. National Customer Service Week is considered a national event and was celebrated for the first time in Mercer Vicinage in October 2001.

In its second year, the program reflected the experience of motivated court staff "committed to providing excellence in public service for the diverse needs of our community," as expressed in the Mercer Vicinage vision statement developed in the past year.

Each division hosted open house activities, which included presentations by court staff highlighting specific programs or functions of each division. The Human Resources Division hosted its Health Fair, which included a free blood screening for participants. The Information Technology Division offered training and recognized the efforts of the vicinage expert users.

Visitors, including court customers and jurors, received detailed information about the services provided by the courts in the jury room and the various customer reception areas. There were displays, charts, pictures, brochures and publications available to employees and the public. Staff was available for questions and to explain the information contained in the materials and displays.

Children received activity books with information about the courts. Jurors learned about sites and activities in and around Trenton. Visitors were encouraged to provide suggestions for improvement of court services by placing completed suggestion forms in suggestion boxes located in the courthouses.

One of the activities introduced this year was the *Excellent Customer Service Recognition Program* hosted by the vicinage's award-winning Service Quality Team. Employees who received letters of appreciation from court

customers or staff for instances of excellent customer service were acknowledged for the positive impact they have in our efforts of building public trust and support.

Assignment Judge Linda R. Feinberg reinforced that quality service remains a core value of the New Jersey Judiciary. Jude Del Preore, Mercer's trial court administrator, stressed that service is the operative word in the vicinage's



Service with a smile—Mercer Vicinage Finance Division staff share a light moment at the customer service window. From left to right are: Michael Tomasulo, Patricia Roth, Mary Smith, Timothy Lyons, Margaret Luce, Donna Rago, Jo Ann Bodyl. Not visible in the back row is Undine Robinson.

vision statement and an important way for us to live our values in the workplace.

The assignment judge and Judith Irizarry, Mercer's ombudsman, introduced the event.

Service Quality Team members Beth Radice and Karen Delfino presented awards to: Susanne Cloyd (Family Division), Letitia Davis (General Operations), Kathleen Davison (Family Division), Maria Dennis (Jury), Jonelle Duncan (Criminal Division), Barbara Letts (Special Civil Part), WillieMae Thompson (Probation Division), Crystal Wilson (Judges Chambers), Danielle Vitella (Criminal Division), Susan Wright (Criminal Division), Linda Yaede (Criminal Division) and John Zera (Criminal Division).

NEW JERSEY JUDICIARY



Mission Statement of the New Jersey Court System

We are an independent branch of government constitutionally entrusted with the fair and just resolution of disputes in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States and this State.